

## **5- Day Itinerary**

### **National Scenic Byway 12**

National Scenic Byway 12-Utah's All-American Road has received such a prestigious designation from the Federal Highway Administration, given to roads that have one-of-a-kind features so exceptional that they qualify as a destination "unto themselves". Scenic Byway 12 is one of the most unique roads in the United States, spanning a route of more than 124 miles travelling through some of the most diverse and ruggedly beautiful landscapes in the country. This 5- Day Itinerary will wind past slick rock canyons, red rock cliff, pine and aspen forests, alpine mountains, state and national parks, a national monument and quaint rural towns with plenty of amenities along the way. There are numerous pullouts located along the route providing great opportunities to photograph the amazing landscape.

**DAY 1-** Get your cameras ready!! Begin your trek along National Scenic Byway 12 as you enter the Dixie National Forest amidst the deep red rock formations of Red Canyon. No matter the amount of time you have to spend you can see spectacular colors, fantastic formations and unique plants found only in the area. To get a more personal feel for red canyon, get your hiking shoes on and let Losee and Casto Canyons introduce you to some of the best hiking, mountain biking, 4-wheeling and horseback riding in all of Southern Utah, for all levels of expertise- beginner to novice.

After, enjoy the wonderful scenery of Red Canyon. Stop at one of the nearby restaurants for a delicious lunch! The next stop along the highway is the Bryce Canyon Wildlife Museum. This state-of-the-art museum features over 800 animals from around the world exhibited in their natural habitats, as well as one of the finest butterfly collections on the West Coast with more than 1,600 butterflies. After enjoying the museum, feed the heard of live European Fallow Deer.

Next, take an afternoon trip to Bryce Canyon National Park. Unique, fiery colored orange pinnacles called hoodoos and endless vistas are what you will find here. Plenty of hiking opportunities are available as well. This 37-mile round-trip drive through the park has numerous viewpoints for a different look of the park after each stop. Enjoy dinner at one of the nearby dining establishments and return to the park to enjoy the sunset at park. After the sun has gone Bryce Canyon boasts some of the darkest, starriest night skies in the country! The rangers at the park provide several different night sky programs including telescope viewing, constellation tours, full moon hikes and astronomy talks. Stay at one of the nearby accommodations overnight.

**DAY 2-** Be ready for a beautiful sunrise over the majestic park itself to start off Day 2. Options of more hiking, photography, a scenic helicopter tour, horseback riding or a ranger guided walk could also be incorporated. After spending the morning in one of the most amazing National Parks have lunch and begin your adventure down Highway 12 again. Experience some the area's rich history at the Ebenezer Bryce Cabin and Historical Museum in Tropic. Stop in Cannonville, the gateway visitor's center to the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, to get maps and information. Just 9 miles south of Highway 12 is Kodachrome Basin State park. Featuring sixty-seven monolithic stone spires called sedimentary pipe or sand pipes, the area is suitable for relaxing and enjoying nature through camping, hiking and photography. After spending time at Kodachrome Basin State Park, travel eight more miles past Kodachrome Basin State park, along the Cottonwood Canyon Scenic Backway and visit Grosvenor's Arch a unique sandstone double arch. Finally head on your back to Highway 12 to the next town, Escalante. Find lodging and dining here for the night. Visit the many art galleries throughout the town, featuring magnificent artwork by local artisans.

**DAY 3-** Wake up in beautiful Escalante with a plethora of scenic adventure options. Go to the Escalante Interagency office to get information and maps on the many wonderful attractions on the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. Visit the Escalante Petrified Forest State Park showcasing colorful petrified wood and fossilized dinosaur bones. There are two established trails winding through vast deposits of some of the most beautiful petrified wood found anywhere with some pieces measuring nearly five feet in diameter.

Another day trip adventure is down the Hole in the Rock Road, take your own vehicle or hire a guide. This historic drive is 57 miles down the Hole in the Rock Scenic Backway, points of interest along the way include; Devils Garden an easy slickrock hiking trail with sandstone spires, domes, narrow passages and small arches. Metate arch is the most popular arch found within the garden. Another wonder along the road is located on the Left Hand Collet canyon, where you can view the petrified dinosaur tracks and skin impressions imbedded in the rocks. Also enjoy several slot canyon hikes such as peekaboo and spooky slot canyons and coyote gulch. This entire road is great for a day trip down or spend several days and nights exploring, hiking, backpacking or just seeing all the intriguing views.

After spending time exploring in the Escalante area, continue along highway 12 to find a series of waterfalls known as Calf Creek Falls. Featuring a breathtaking 126 ft waterfall accessible by a roundtrip hike of only 5 ½ miles, for the more adventurous visit Upper Calf Creek Falls, a short and rugged hike to another dramatic waterfall view. Along highway 12 another main feature is the Hogback, a stretch of highway that has steep-drop-offs on both sides. Stop at the pullouts and see the different views of the surrounding sandstone country, this road is completely safe to drive and open all year.

Another compelling stop along this route is Hell's Backbone. This road was established in 1938 to help connect the residents of Boulder and Escalante, as well as for the mail couriers to deliver mail to boulder. Pristine forests and unexpected deep canyons can be viewed from the bridge.

**Day 4-** Overnight in Boulder, a quaint town known as the "last frontier in Utah". This small town was the last place in the United States to receive mail by mule. Some popular activities you can do in Boulder is to visit the Anasazi State Park Museum, depicting hundreds of structures and thousands of artifacts on display. Boulder also prides itself on the quiet use activities in the area. Birding has become an extremely popular activity in Boulder as well. Enjoy an 11- acre designated bird sanctuary or take the day to explore the Burr Trail Scenic Backway. This is an alternate route from Boulder to Ticaboo and the Bullfrog Marina. The route passes through the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, through Capitol Reef National Park and the Glen Canyon National Recreation area. This route is full of breathtaking scenery and striking views of the Circle Cliff, the Waterpocket Fold of Capitol Reef and the Henry Mountains. Long Canyon is another colorful gorge through the Burr Trail. All of Long canyon is paved delivering visitors to numerous hiking spots and slot canyons ideal for canyoneering.

**Day 5-** At the end of National Scenic Byway 12 enjoy Capitol Reef National park, reaching it either via the Burr Trail or along Highway 12. Spend some time in this majestic National Park featuring a 75-mile monocline ridge. There are several activities in this park as well.

**\*\*Please note these are only suggestions along National Scenic Byway 12- there are several other options along this route as well as various other fishing, camping, hiking, horseback riding and ATV riding opportunities.**